



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FISCAL YEAR 2014

DHS GRANT PROGRAMS

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCE:
SAFECON GUIDANCE ON EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS GRANTS OVERVIEW**



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

SAFECOM is a public safety-driven communications program managed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Within DHS, the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) develops policy, guidance, and future efforts by drawing on SAFECOM member expertise and recommendations. The Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC) supports SAFECOM-related research, development, testing, evaluation, as well as the acceleration of standards. SAFECOM works to build partnerships among all levels of government, linking the strategic planning and implementation needs of the emergency response community with Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments, to improve emergency communications. Together, DHS, its Federal agency partners, and the SAFECOM Executive Committee and Emergency Response Council shape emergency communications policy and standards to ensure projects comply with the goals and objectives established in the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP)¹, are compatible, interoperable, and most importantly, meet the needs of end-users.

OEC, in coordination with Federal agency partners and State and local stakeholders, develops the annual *SAFECOM Guidance for Emergency Communication Grants (SAFECOM Guidance)* which provides general program guidance and technical information for entities applying for Federal financial assistance² for emergency communications projects. The *SAFECOM Guidance* provides general information on eligible activities, technical standards, and other terms and conditions that are common to most Federal emergency communications grants. Recipients (including sub-recipients) who receive awards made under programs that wholly or partially provide funding for emergency communication projects and related activities must comply with the *FY 2014 SAFECOM Guidance*. This includes provisions on technical standards that ensure and enhance interoperable communications, unless otherwise noted in the program's Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA).³

The *FY 2014 SAFECOM Guidance* provides a list of emergency communication priorities and Federal funding recipients are strongly encouraged to target grant funding toward the following priorities:

- Priority 1: Leadership and Governance
- Priority 2: Statewide Planning for Emergency Communications
- Priority 3: Emergency Communications Training and Exercises
- Priority 4: Activities that Enhance Operational Coordination
- Priority 5: Standards-Based Equipment⁴

¹ DHS is updating the NECP in 2014. For more information on the NECP, see: http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/national_emergency_communications_plan.pdf.

² Federal financial assistance includes grants, loans, cooperative agreements, and other financial assistance provided by the Federal government.

³ Grant requirements, including technical standards vary among Federal grant programs (especially grants funding research and testing). Applicants should review each program's grant guidance carefully to ensure that specific standards, terms, and conditions under the grant are met.

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The *FY 2014 SAFECOM Guidance* should be used during the planning, development, and implementation of emergency communications projects and in conjunction with other planning documents. The *SAFECOM Guidance* serves many purposes. First, it is designed to promote and align with the national emergency communications goals established in the NECP. Second, the recommendations are intended to help State, local, tribal, and territorial stakeholders develop projects that meet critical emergency communications needs defined in their Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP).⁵ Finally, the *Guidance* aims to ensure that emergency communications standards and policies across Federal grant programs provide a consistent approach to improving emergency communications nationwide. Recipients are encouraged to secure a letter of support from the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) for emergency communications projects as part of their application.

The full *SAFECOM Guidance* may be found at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov/default.aspx>. Specific questions regarding SAFECOM requirements should be directed to OEC at OEC@hq.dhs.gov.

⁵ For information on SCIPs, see the OEC website at: http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1225902750156.shtm.